

Mr. MCCAIN. In light of these agreements, I now announce there will be no further rollcall votes this evening.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### MONTANA POLE VAULTERS

Mr. BAUCUS. Mr. President, I rise to take a moment to share with the Senate the remarkable accomplishments of some truly "high fliers."

All of us in this body travel to schools and encourage tomorrow's leaders to "aim high." Last week, three Montana pole vaulters did just that and the result was that collegiate and high school records fell.

Three extraordinary women, all from my hometown of Helena, made a bit of history.

On the collegiate level, Helena High Graduate and University of Montana freshman Nicole Zeller twice set new Big Sky Conference records in the pole vault, first by clearing 11 feet 10 inches, and then, improving her own record with a vault of 12 feet, ½ inch.

Meanwhile, two Helena high school students—one from my and Senator ROTH's alma mater, Helena High, the other from Capital High—were registering the two best vaults in the nation this year. One of them set a new national record for high school pole vaulters.

Not only did Shannon Agee of Helena High set a new national record. She beat the old one by a mile. She vaulted 13 feet and eclipsed the old record by a full incredible five inches.

On the same day, Capital High senior Suzanne Krings cleared 12 feet 6 inches, giving her the second-best vault in the nation this year.

So today, Mr. President, I extend my congratulations to Shannon, Suzanne and Nicole for showing all of us how to soar.

#### THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

MR. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Monday, May 11, 1998, the federal debt stood at \$5,487,765,423,650.36 (Five trillion, four hundred eighty-seven billion, seven hundred sixty-five million, four hundred twenty-three thousand, six hundred fifty dollars and thirty-six cents).

Five years ago, May 11, 1993, the federal debt stood at \$4,241,563,000,000 (Four trillion, two hundred forty-one billion, five hundred sixty-three million).

Ten years ago, May 11, 1988, the federal debt stood at \$2,511,066,000,000 (Two trillion, five hundred eleven billion, sixty-six million).

Fifteen years ago, May 11, 1983, the federal debt stood at \$1,257,970,000,000 (One trillion, two hundred fifty-seven billion, nine hundred seventy million).

Twenty-five years ago, May 11, 1973, the federal debt stood at \$453,530,000,000 (Four hundred fifty-three billion, five hundred thirty million) which reflects a debt increase of more than \$5 trillion—\$5,034,235,423,650.36 (Five trillion, thirty-four billion, two hundred thirty-

five million, four hundred twenty-three thousand, six hundred fifty dollars and thirty-six cents) during the past 25 years.

#### THE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH, EXTENSION AND EDUCATION REFORM ACT OF 1998

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today, the Senate passed the conference agreement on S. 1150, the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998. I am pleased that this important legislation, containing several amendments I authored, has seen its way to the Senate floor for proper and overdue consideration and passage.

Mr. President, the agricultural provisions of this bill are important for all farmers but I am especially proud of the provisions targeted to support our endangered small farmers.

Mr. President, this country is facing a national farming crisis. Day after day, season after season, we are losing small farms at an alarming rate. In 1980, there were 45,000 dairy farms in Wisconsin. In 1997, there are only 24,000 dairy farms. That is a loss of more than 3 dairy farms a day-everyday for 17 years. And it does not begin to measure the human cost to families driven from the land. As small farms disappear, we are witnessing the emergence of larger agricultural operations. This trend toward fewer but larger dairy operations is mirrored in most States throughout the Nation.

Mr. President, the economic losses associated with the reduction in the number of small farms go well beyond the impact on the individual farm families who must wrench themselves from the land. The reduction in farm numbers has hurt their neighbors as well and deprived the merchants on the main streets of their towns of many lifelong customers. For many of the rural communities of Wisconsin, small family-owned farms are the key component of the community. They provide economic and sound stability. They are good people and we need a system in which their farms are viable and their work can be fairly rewarded.

Many feel that basic research is a necessary and underutilized tool that can help to save this dying breed of farmers. There have been plenty of Federal investments in agricultural research, past and present, focusing almost solely on the needs of larger scale agricultural producers-neglecting the specific research needs of small producers. This research bias has hamstrung small farmers, depriving them of the tools they need to adapt to changes in farming and the marketplace and accelerating the trend toward increased concentration.

To address this concern, I worked with the conference committee to include a provision which authorizes a coordinated program of research, extension, and education to improve the viability of small- and medium-size

dairy and livestock operations. Among the research projects the Secretary is authorized to conduct are: Research, development, and on-farm education, low-cost production facilities, management systems and genetics appropriate for these small and medium operations, research and extension on management intensive grazing systems which reduce feed costs and improve farm profitability, research and extension on integrated crop and livestock systems that strengthen the competitive position of small- and medium-size operations, economic analyses and feasibility studies to identify new marketing opportunities for small- and medium-size producers, technology assessment that compares the technological resources of large specialized producers with the technological needs of small- and medium-size dairy and livestock operations, and research to identify the specific research and education needs of these small operations.

The provision allows the Secretary to carry out this new program using existing USDA funds, facilities and technical expertise. Dairy and livestock producers should not be forced to become larger in order to remain competitive. Bigger is not necessarily better. And in fact, M. President, expansion is often counterproductive for small operations, requiring them to take on even greater debt. Farmers need more help in determining other methods of maintaining long-term profitability. For example, small dairy farmers may find adoption of management-intensive grazing systems, combined with a diversified cropping operation a profitable alternative to expansion. But there has been far too little federally funded research devoted to alternative livestock production systems. Small producers need more Federal research and extension activity devoted to the development of these alternatives. This amendment is a good first step in establishing the Federal research commitment to help develop and promote production and marketing systems that specifically address the needs of small producers.

Using research dollars to help maintain the economic viability of small- and medium-size dairy and livestock operations has benefits beyond those gained by farmers and the communities in which they reside. Keeping a large number of small operations in production can provide environmental benefits as well. As livestock operations expand their herd size without a corresponding increase in cropping acreage, manure storage and management practices become more costly and more burdensome for the operator and raise additional regulatory concerns associated with runoff and water quality among State and Federal regulators. Research that helps dairy and livestock operators remain competitive and profitable without dramatic expansion will help minimize these concerns.